How to Create a B2B Buyer Persona and Write More Engaging Copy

By Steve Slaunwhite



- **Ask your client about their buyer persona**
- **Write copy tailored to the prospect**
- **These two steps help you create a persona**
- **Eight questions you need to ask**
- **Let Steve help you become a B2B copywriter**

Before sitting down to hammer out some great copy, a smart copywriter will ask his client if she has a "buyer persona" available. A buyer persona is simply a representative profile of the target audience your client is trying to reach.

For example, say your client is a forklift manufacturer. You find out they have a buyer persona prepared called, "Mary the Warehouse Operations Director." It contains a bullet list of what "Mary" is actually like.

Trust me, you'll want to have that document in front of you. It's going to make it a lot easier to write the website, email campaign, ad, white paper, or whatever piece you've been hired to write — and do so faster and better.

Why? Because you'll be able to visualize the target audience and write engaging copy that's tailored to their specific challenges, needs, and interests.

Think of it this way: Would you have better luck coaxing a friend to try a new restaurant? Or a stranger? The answer, of course, is a friend. That's because you *know* them. You know what they like and don't like about restaurants. So you can more quickly, and accurately, figure out what to say to persuade them.

A buyer persona gives you a similar advantage.

But what if your client doesn't have a buyer persona? What if he just says, "Our prospects are accountants? They're numbers people." Is that enough to go on?

No. You need more. That's why, as a B2B copywriter or content writer, you'll sometimes find yourself having to create the buyer persona.

Don't worry. It's not that difficult. There's just two steps:

1. Give the persona a name and title. For example, "Gail the Marketing Manager."
2. Make a bullet list of the characteristics of that person, especially as it relates to your client's product or service. (This is usually no more than a page.)

Where do you find that information?

Begin with your client. During the initial project meeting, say, "Let's talk about the target audience." Then ask questions that will give you the insights you need. For example:

- What is their job title?
- What are their biggest challenges?
- What prompts them to buy a product/service like yours?
- What issues or concerns are top-of-mind for them?
- What education level do they typically have?
- What do they like about their occupation? What do they not like?
- Are they sole decision makers? Or do they need to get major buying decisions approved?
- What would possibly dissuade them from buying from you?

The idea is to get as clear a picture as possible of the target audience.

Another source is your client's sales staff. After all, they talk to prospects and customers every day. They know, probably better than anyone, what makes them tick. I always ask new clients if I can speak to one of their sales reps. Often, the information I get is golden.

Finally, visit the website of the target audience's professional or trade association. There's one for just about every group these days. A couple of years ago, I was hired by a client whose target audience is independent health food retailers. Sure enough, they had their own association.

When you visit an association website, check out the events page. If they have an annual conference, scroll through the session topics. Often, these topics mirror what is top-of-mind for the target audience. For example, if you're researching real estate agents on the National Association of Realtors website, you'll notice social media marketing is something agents are thinking about.

Creating a buyer persona doesn't take that long. (Really, it doesn't.) The payoff is being able to write great, engaging copy for your B2B client, faster and more easily.

Your takeaway for today: Buyer personas are important. They help you speak directly to the prospect. Follow Steve's steps for creating the perfect B2B buyer persona and you'll be able to write stronger, more engaging copy.

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